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BOYHOOD DAYS  
AND  
OTHER VERSES



BY  
JOHN G. HERNDON

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WASHINGTON, D. C.



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DEC 30 1920

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## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

In mem'ry's flower garden we spend each Christmas day  
With all our friends and loved ones—some near, some far away—  
In silent, sweet communion—love's language needs no words,  
No more than smiling flowers or music of the birds.  
The fragrance of the roses—the song of nightingale—  
Each tells its own sweet story, where spoken words would fail.  
And so this Christmas morning—dear friend or loved one true—  
We send a message freighted with tender thoughts of you.

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## MEMORY'S PICTURE GALLERY

Some of the happiest hours of the Christmas season are those  
we spend in Memory's Picture Gallery.

We were in the gallery today, and as we stood before your  
picture, Memory opened her treasurehouse and with lavish hand  
placed her richest gifts at your feet.

## BOYHOOD DAYS

I've been thinking of my boyhood, and the tasks I had to do—  
Shucking corn for three old horses, and of mules a score or two;  
Also cows and calves by dozens—just the number I've forgot—  
While the hogs, by tens and twenties, filled a good two-acre lot.

Then I carried out the fodder, and the corn and shucks and hay,  
Filled the troughs with drinking water from a spring not far away.  
Next I cut a stack of stovewood, turned the grindstone for an hour,  
Till my eyes had left their sockets and my arms had lost their  
power.

Then I weeded out the garden, pulled the purslane for the hogs,  
Drove the cattle to the pasture, carried breakfast to the dogs,  
Brought the roasting ears for dinner, cut the grass upon the lawn,  
Never stopped a blessed minute from the time I rose at dawn.

But at last my tasks were ended, and I dug a can of bait,  
For I'd planned to go a-fishing, and I feared I might be late.  
Hadn't time to wait for dinner, ate a lunch and grabbed my poles,  
For I heard the trout were striking, in the creek, below the shoals.

Soon I reached those well-known waters, for my dogs had set the  
pace,  
And I followed fast and faster, trying hard to win the race.  
But I could not overtake them, though I did my very best,  
Yet I made them keep a-moving, and they had no time for rest.

Sure enough, the fish were biting, but I only caught two cat;  
Could not even tempt the others, though the worms were nice and  
fat.  
Must have known the bait was loaded, or they'd lost their appetite,  
For they would not even nibble, though I fished till almost night.

Those old days were bright with sunshine, not a cloud was in the  
sky,  
Fields were full of birds and flowers, and the streams were always  
nigh.  
True, the tasks seemed hard and heavy, but I doubt if they were so;  
I may not remember rightly, it has been so long ago.

But they now would be most welcome, and I'd do them with a will,  
Could I live those old days over and go fishing by the mill,  
Where I've seen my cork jerked under and my line pulled in and  
out,  
As I played for full five minutes with a monster five-pound trout.



## CHRISTMAS EVE

On Christmas eve we sat alone, my dear good wife and I,  
Because the children, now full grown, had scattered far and nigh.  
The open fire, though burning low, shed warmth throughout the  
    room,  
While ghostly shadows played strange pranks in the encircling  
    gloom.

We talked of each dear absent one and longed to see each face,  
And wished they all were home again in their accustomed place.  
And while we sat we fell asleep and dreamed the children came  
And nestled in our arms once more and loved us just the same.

They talked of dear old Santa Claus and of the snowy drifts  
Through which his reindeer plow their way with all their precious  
    gifts.

The mantelpiece with stockings hung, all waiting to be filled  
With dolls and balls and other toys, such as each youngster willed.

But Santa makes no Christmas calls while children are awake,  
He waits till they are fast asleep ere he will visits make.  
And so they put their nighties on, and in their trundle bed  
They soon were snugly tucked away, each curly little head.

Then Santa down the chimney came with his great pack of toys,  
Some suitable for little girls and some for little boys.  
But when the stockings all were filled he quickly sped away,  
To visit other boys and girls before the break of day.

The household now was fast asleep, but when the morning came,  
I put fresh fuel on the fire, which soon burst into flame.  
And then the children, wide awake, jumped from their trundle bed,  
As visions of dear Santa's gifts danced through each little head.

But when they'd feasted eyes and lips till they could wish no more,  
A coal of fire popped on the hearth and then rolled on the floor.  
The noise it made awakened us and then we went to bed,  
To dream once more those same sweet dreams until the night had  
    sped.

But were they dreams? Or did they come and play their childish  
    part?  
And did we hold them in our arms and press them to our heart?  
And what are dreams? Are they, indeed, mere phantoms of the  
    brain?  
Or mental pictures of our thoughts that soothe or cause us pain?

I know not what the answer is, but this I know full well,  
That I could see no difference nor e'en the slightest tell  
Between our little boys and girls and those I saw that night,  
When I was in the Land of Nod with all those visions bright.

## EVOLUTION

When Dick Brown left our village to hunt a job out west,  
He said he'd write me reg'lar, 'bout once a week, he guessed.  
An' Dick, he kept his promise, for quite a while, at least,  
For he was awful lonesome when first he left the east.

But when Dick got acquainted and made some friends out there,  
His letters were less frequent, but still he seemed to care  
For his old friend of boyhood, and early manhood, too,  
Yet, there was something lacking, just what, I scarcely knew.

And then I heard that Richard was winning great renown  
As the progressive mayor of some big western town.  
His name was in the papers a great deal here of late—  
They mentioned him for Congress and Guv'ner of the State.

I wrote him how delighted I was to hear the news  
That he at last was getting a small share of his dues.  
I knew he'd climb fame's ladder and reach the topmost round,  
For he was a reformer whose doctrines all were sound.

And when I got his answer, some four weeks from that date,  
He said that he'd been busy a-canvassing of late.  
The fight was on for Guv'ner and he was in the thick,  
He'd got the nomination and hoped to take the trick.

His brief reply was printed upon a type machine,  
Not written out in long hand as all the rest had been.  
He signed it at the bottom, or, rather, stamped his name,  
Or had his chief clerk do it, which 'mounted to the same.

And when he was elected as Guv'ner of the State,  
I sent congratulations to its chief magistrate.  
I wrote a friendly letter, as I had always done,  
Before he was exalted or laurels great had won.

One day there came a letter in unfamiliar hand,  
Typewritten like the last one, but signed by William Bland,  
The Guv'ner's Secretary—a formal sort of note,  
That made me think of autumn—not warm like one I wrote.

It said my friend, the Guv'ner, was busy as could be,  
And hadn't time to answer the letter sent by me;  
That he had been deputed to thank me in his stead  
For my congratulations and other things I said.

While I was disappointed, there was no thought of blame  
Attaching to the Guv'ner because he stamped his name  
To those machine-made letters, or had them signed by Bland,  
His private secretary, with flourish great and grand.

But I did miss his letters—the kind he used to write  
'Fore he was 'lected mayor or won the Guv'ner's fight.  
Still, I am not complaining, although I feel the loss  
Caused by his evolution from underling to boss.

## A SHABBY TRICK

My stomach is a mystery that always keeps me guessing,  
Sometimes it's in quiescent mood, sometimes it's effervescing.  
If I eat mush and milk and eggs and cream of wheat with butter,  
It keeps as quiet as a lamb and does not even mutter.

But if I tire of soft-boiled rice and eat a quart of mincemeat,  
And lemon pie with nice whipped cream and pickled tripe and  
pigs feet,  
Its indignation knows no bounds, yet I o'erlook the danger  
Till I am being carted home by some kind-hearted stranger.

It seems to have a strange distaste for ev'ry thing worth eating,  
And if I try to slip some in it charges me with cheating.  
And then it starts a rough house fight and kicks my slats asunder,  
While surgeons swarm around my bed as I look on in wonder.

It always seems to have a grouch, and if I make a blunder,  
It beats the tom toms and the drums and starts to raising thunder.  
And when its wrath gets boiling hot it charges me with treason,  
And has me hamstrung e'er I'm shot, for no good earthly reason.

I try to lead a quiet life, free from all care and worry,  
But when it starts to raising cain it gets me in a flurry;  
For I know well the ruthless hand with which it flays its quarry,  
It grips and gripes and counter twists till he is sick and sorry.

Yet bright-eyed hope is with me yet and beckons me to follow,  
And I will back her with my all, my last good silver dollar.  
You see, I have a doctor friend, who says the human stomach  
Is fashioned like Sir William Goat's, a gently rising hummock.

And that he's found a male suspect that fits all the dimensions  
Of height and breadth and oval shape, yet has no great pretensions.  
The doctor plans to dope this goat, and me, too, for that matter,  
Till we are both so sound asleep that we can't talk or chatter.

My stomach then he'll slip the goat and goat's to me, so quiet,  
We'll never know it till it's done and we get our new diet.  
The scheme, I'm sure, will work out well, although 'tis somewhat  
nervy,  
But I'll admit I am ashamed to treat a goat so scurvy.

## THE AUTOCRAT

The autocrat feels ten feet high and that you're scarce ten inches,  
He stalks the earth, blood in his eyes, and from no duty flinches.  
If he thinks best to go to war he scorns adverse opinions,  
And calls to arms five million men of his best fighting minions.

But autocrats are not confined to rulers of the nations,  
You find them in all walks of life, in high and lowly stations.  
The Navy has its quota full, the Army goes one better,  
While all departments have their share of those who try to fetter.

The Congress has its bosses, too, and woe to him who places  
His life and limb in jeopardy by kicking o'er the traces.  
The anarchists and kindred cults have their own brand of heroes,  
Who throw the bomb and ply the torch, like good old-fashioned  
Neros.

The business and labor men are sparring for position,  
Each giant autocratic lord intent on his ambition.  
The social world has kings and queens of undisputed power,  
And those who disregard their will are crushed like some poor  
flower.

The autocrats are all alike, in that they think the Master  
Has fashioned them of finer stuff than that in common plaster.  
That they, indeed, are supermen, the blessed Lord's anointed,  
And that they rule by right divine, though by some man appointed.

They seem to have supreme contempt for any man's opinion  
If it runs counter to their own or questions their dominion.  
Their manner says, "We know it all," as though through countless  
ages  
They'd drunk at wisdom's fountainhead and hobnobbed with the  
sages.

## TO FRANCES HAND

She's a dainty little creature—this maid who's come to town—  
Her eyes are bright and beautiful, her hair is darkest brown.

Her ears are like two perfect pearls, her cheeks like blushing rose,  
She has the sweetest little mouth and such a pretty nose.

Her dimpled arms our hearts entwine, and will not let us go,  
She's made us all her willing slaves, because we love her so.

She's a winsome little lassie, none sweeter in the land,  
And here's a welcome warm and true to charming Frances Hand.



## TO MRS. JOHN SKELTON WILLIAMS

Written on the occasion of her visit to the Issue Division, Office of  
Comptroller of the Currency, March 3, 1917.

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The third of March was dark and drear and damp and most  
depressing,  
While gloomy forecasts filled our minds—forebodings quite  
distressing.

The leaden clouds hung low and wept in sullen, angry passion,  
And somber garb and waterproofs were in the reigning fashion.

But in a moment all was changed—at least in our division—  
Where there appeared a radiant form—a bright and lovely vision.  
The rain had ceased, the clouds were gone, the sun burst forth in  
glory,  
And birds were singing in the trees their glad and joyful story.

All nature seemed in smiling mood, and odors of sweet flowers  
Were wafted from the sunny South—a breath from Eden's bowers.  
A subtle charm had filled the room, as though some great Aladdin  
Had wrought sweet magic with his wand, our eyes and hearts to  
gladden.

## A BIRTHDAY OFFERING

You ask me for a poem on this your natal day,  
But, I regret to tell you, I know not what to say.  
You see, I just have met you, once only have I seen  
Your face, so bright and smiling, like that of fair young queen.  
Not ruler of a nation, but sov'reign of some heart,  
O'er which she wields Love's scepter—a woman's noblest part.

But I have heard about you, and your pet bulldog, too—  
Of his intense devotion and loyalty to you.  
But I quite understand it, for he, with vision keen,  
Sees naught but goodness in you—his royal heroine.  
I'd highly prize such friendship and this you doubtless do,  
For it is so unselfish—his faith and trust in you.

But I must end these verses, lest you should weary grow,  
For I am but a stranger—a man you scarcely know.  
Yet ere I close the chapter, which I must quickly do,  
For it is hot and sultry and thunderstorms are due,  
I want to make some wishes, if I may be so bold—  
Some verses for your scrapbook, and then my tale is told.

I wish you health and happiness and pleasures not a few,  
A host of friends to share your joys or sympathize with you;  
And as you journey through the years, over life's rough mountains,  
May song birds make sweet melody by living streams and fountains.  
May roses bloom along your path to cheer you on your way,  
And their sweet fragrance fill your heart throughout the live-long  
day.

## STAMPS AND BONDS

The thrift stamps are war savings stamps still in their swaddling  
clo'es,  
Ere they cast off their baby dress before their number grows.

War savings stamps are full-grown bonds of small denomination,  
Yet they and other stamps and bonds will help to save our nation.

Liberty bonds are this country's hope that soon the world's great  
sages  
Will meet to make a lasting peace, to live throughout the ages.

Stamps and bonds are the battleships that keep the oceans free  
From the hellish, fiendish U-boats, those jackals of the sea.

Stamps and bonds are the aeroplanes that scourge the dastard foe  
With shot and shell and dynamite, to strike the vandals low.

Stamps and bonds are the armored tanks, crashing o'er the trenches,  
And drinking deep of human gore until their thirst it quenches.

Stamps and bonds are the bayonets that make the red blood flow  
When English, French, Americans drive home the fatal blow.

Stamps and bonds are our fighting men, as brave as e'er drew lance,  
Who soon will win the victory on fields of sunny France.

Stamps and bonds are the coal and oil that feed the furnace fires  
Of all the dreadnaught battleships and airplanes of our fliers.

Stamps and bonds are the food and drink of those who fight our  
battle,  
That nerve the arm to boldly strike though cannon roar and rattle.

Stamps and bonds are the shoes and socks and clothing soft and  
warm  
That keep our troops in health and strength and free from needless  
harm.

Stamps and bonds are heart-felt prayers that we may still be  
freemen;  
That right may triumph over wrong and slay the German demon.

Stamps and bonds are the medicines, the doctors and the nurses,  
That soothe the sorely wounded men and banish pain and curses.

Stamps and bonds are the mercy ships we send to aid the stricken,  
And bring our boys back home again, where love their hearts will  
quicken.

Stamps and bonds are the nation's pledge to make the Huns  
surrender,  
So steel your heart to do its part to crush the great pretender.

Follow the lead with deathless deed of all your great commanders,  
And the sun will shine with light divine from Italy to Flanders.

## A SOLILOQUY ON KISSES

When we were little baby boys, with strange and ugly features,  
The girls would kiss and cuddle us and call us darling creatures.  
E'en when we reached youth's golden age, the dainty little misses  
Would sometimes let us hold their hands and give us sweetest  
kisses.

But we could not retain their gifts, and though they gave us  
pleasure,  
We always gave them back again, sometimes in double measure.  
But just how many we returned it did not seem to matter,  
A dozen kisses more or less would always highly flatter.

But when we grew to man's estate, we rested on our laurels,  
Lest, should we still pursue the game, it lead to lovers' quarrels.  
Then, too, the girls—the mean old things—grew stingy with their  
kisses,  
Or else they gave them all away when they were little misses.

And now, though we are in our prime, for we are only fifty,  
We never get a blessed one, though we feel fine and nifty.  
The babies and the little boys get more than their full measure,  
While we await, like some poor skate, their gracious will and  
pleasure.

If we advance, they kick and prance, and give us slaps and hisses,  
They seem to think we're on the blink and should not care for kisses.  
They look upon us bachelors as derelicts belated,  
And then refuse to come across and call us antiquated.

But they can't make our spirits sad because they keep their kisses,  
For we remember other days and just as charming misses.  
We only have to backward glance to call up pleasing fancies  
Of long-forgotten moonlight strolls, of boatings, drives, and dances.

For memory's a mirror bright in which we see the faces,  
And hear the voices speak to us, and note the charming graces  
Of all our boyish sweethearts, those matchless little misses,  
To whom we told our youthful love and claimed a lover's kisses.

## THE EYE OF FAITH

Though poor in purse and slaves of toil, yet we may travel far  
Beyond the confines of this sphere—past moon and sun and star.  
Though unknown to earth's potentates or favor it oft brings,  
Yet we may talk and walk with God, as friend of King of Kings.  
Though we may be denied the sight of all earth's beauties rare,  
Yet see the New Jerusalem—that city wondrous fair.  
The vision of the soul of man is limitless as space;  
It sees beyond the things of time; there is no secret place  
It can not pierce. The eye of faith is God's own telescope,  
Through which we see the future life—the substance of our hope.

## A HARD LUCK STORY

I tried to find a publisher with whom to share the glories  
That would be ours if he would print my verses and my stories.  
And so I sent the magazines some poems choice and tender,  
But soon they all came marching home to their astonished sender.

You see, I wanted pay for them, and hoped they'd be best sellers,  
But when the postman brought them back I stored them in my  
cellars.

I tried to reason out the cause for their insane rejection,  
And wondered could it be the price, or was it a reflection?

One day the thought occurred to me that it would be a pity  
To longer hide such charming verse, so bright and fine and witty,  
Because some sordid publisher refused to share his riches,  
And thus enable me to buy a shirt or pair of breeches.

And so I sent the poems back, expecting publication  
When it was known I'd not accept one cent of compensation.  
But just imagine my surprise and utter consternation  
When all the brood came home to roost in silent indignation.

One skinflint wrote he'd publish them as advertising matter  
If I would pay him double price, and all such senseless chatter.  
Another said, "The Record try; just write the Public Printer,"  
But I'm no longer Congressman, I walked the plank last winter.

Dismayed, I asked a few close friends if any publication  
Could print my verse and still survive, with hope of full salvation.  
Some seemed inclined to think it might, while others, more  
outspoken,  
Said it would be a monstrous crime, of madness a sure token.

Not satisfied, I sought advice from solons of the nation,  
I wrote to Oscar Underwood and others high in station.  
Pat Harrison and Uncle Joe said they were loath to measure  
Or sit in judgment on my verse and must decline that pleasure.

I 'phoned to Henry Cabot Lodge and also James Y. Sherman,  
But they were busy making plans to circumvent the German.  
I cabled then to Col. House, in care of league of nations,  
But he was like an oyster dumb and made no observations.

And thus the matter stands today and will throughout the ages,  
Unless some publisher relents and offers me his pages.  
For I can not afford to write and also pay the printer,  
Unless I dress like Hottentot and hibernate in winter.



## NATURE QUERIES

Who gives to the trees their fragrance—odors pleasing, sweet, and fine—

The aroma to the balsam, cedar, sandal-wood, and pine?

Who perfumes all the hyacinths, the lilies, and the roses,

Carnations, jasmines, heliotrope, and violets for posies?

Who gives the color to the pink, the brilliant morning-glory,

And all those countless charming blooms that live in song and story?

Who cuts the patterns for the leaves, on tree, on shrub, and flower,  
And gives to each a varied shape by his almighty power?

Who fashions all the butterflies and dresses them in splendor—

In royal purple, cloth-of-gold, with trimmings broad and slender?

Who makes the models for the fir, the towering, sturdy oak,

Mammoth cypress, giant redwood, that defies the lightning's stroke?

Who seals the cotton in green bolls, to shield it from the weather,  
Till summer sunshine frees the lint, as light as downy feather?

Who teaches song birds how to sing notes dreamy slow, then faster,

The mocking-bird and nightingale—who is their music master?

Who plants the mosses and the ferns in the cool and shady nooks,  
Fringing woodland pools and marshes and the banks of running  
brooks?

Who transforms the barren baldness of the bleak old mountain's  
face,

Covers it with living lichens—etchings fine, like filmy lace?

Who plans the charming landscapes of the valleys, hills, and dale,  
Flooding them by day with sunshine, in the night with moonbeams  
pale?

Who carpets all the earth in green and waters it with showers,

Gives all the fruits of Paradise that bloomed in Eden's bowers?

Who sets the jewels in the sky, in countless groups and numbers,  
That shed a soft sweet radiance and watch while mankind slumbers?

Who flavors all the fruits and nuts, the grapes, and all the berries,

The watermelon, juicy sweet, with meat like bright red cherries?

Who paints the peacock's feathers fine, in gorgeous hues, yet  
pleasant,

The humming and the regent birds, the golden finch and pheasant?

Who hangs the rainbow on the sky, where its gleaming bars unfurl,

And tints the diamond, amethyst, ruby, sapphire, topaz, pearl?

Who made all things—the sun and moon, the stars and silent spaces,

The earth, the seas, the clouds, the breeze, and people of all races?

Who throws love's mantle o'er our griefs as we journey here below,

And blots out all our waywardness as he hides the earth with snow?

Who wraps us in love's tender folds as we bend beneath the rod—

The Great Jehovah, King of Kings, Everlasting Father—GOD.

## THE BALANCE SHEET

To-night I'm in my counting-house, with ledgers all around,  
The blinds are closed and doors shut tight, to keep out sight and  
    sound.

I do not want to be disturbed, I want to be alone,  
While I look o'er the record books of all the years I've known.  
The volumes number sixty-four—a ledger for each year—  
But they have been quite poorly kept; I've tried, but failed, I fear.  
I take the volumes, one by one, and as I scan each page,  
I find there entries long forgot, and yellow from old age.  
But none of them has faded out, though written years ago,  
They still stand forth in bold relief, undimmed by Time's swift  
    flow.

And as I read these records o'er—my thoughts far backward cast—  
Long-buried memories troop forth from out the dim, dead past.  
Sweet memories of blessed days, whose incense rises yet,  
Sad memories, when Death stalked forth, and slew without regret.  
But I must bar these phantoms out—these ghosts of other days—  
I have no time for retrospect; it hinders and delays  
The settlement of my accounts, at which I've worked in vain,  
Because of countless errors made that now appear quite plain.  
And while I worked I fell asleep and dreamed the Master came  
And straightened out the tangled threads without one word of  
    blame;

Then balanced all the record books and closed them, one by one,  
And when He sealed them with His name I knew my work was done.  
'Twas but a dream. I still toil on. Yet hope springs in my breast,  
That when at last my work is done—God grant it stand the test—  
That Christ will balance my accounts, as He did in my dream,  
Then take them to the highest court, before the Judge Supreme,  
Where He—the Great Eternal God—will search the records  
    through,  
And check them 'gainst the balance sheet and find them clean and  
    true.

## FOLLOW THE FLAG

Follow the flag though U-boats lie in wait for their human prey;  
Follow it though you have to die ere dawn of another day.  
Follow it though the dreadnaughts roar and the gunners find their  
    mark;

Follow it though your ship goes down in the waters cold and dark.

Follow the flag through smoke and flame and the poison-laden air;  
Follow it through the gates of death if your duty calls you there.  
Follow it over the trench's top and over the bursting mine;  
Follow it though they charge with steel and the blood runs red like  
    wine.

Follow the flag though Zeppelins rain shells like showering stars;  
Follow it though your dauntless soul should burst through its  
    prison bars.

Follow the flag with sword unsheathed and strike with a master  
    hand;  
Strike for God and humanity, your homes, and your own fair land.

## YOUTH

In youth we dream of battle's gleam  
And deeds of deathless valor,  
Our hearts are stanch and cheeks ne'er blanch  
With coward fear or pallor.  
We long for life and court its strife,  
Of vict'ry sure and certain,  
We'll do or die to write on high  
Our name on Fame's bright curtain.

Though others fail to reach the pale  
Where dwell the great immortals,  
We'll never rest till we are blest  
And safe within its portals.  
We know we're right—we'll win the fight—  
And wear the wreath of laurel,  
No doubts arise before our eyes—  
With Fate we have no quarrel.

With vision keen we pierce the screen  
That's shrouded all the ages,  
Its secrets old to us unfold,  
Though unknown to the sages.  
We clearly see life's mystery—  
From us there's nothing hidden,  
We'd undertake a world to make  
If we were only bidden.

Oh, youthful prime, life's summertime,  
When bloom its fairest flowers,  
When hope is bright and hearts beat light,  
And love's sweet dream is ours.  
Like valiant knight uphold the right  
And hope will reach fruition,  
Though unkind fate would close the gate  
That leads to your ambition.

Make Truth your shield and never yield  
Where honor bids you battle,  
But fight your way through life's brief day  
Though sabers flash and rattle.  
In faith sublime still upward climb  
And you will reach the summit,  
If you can bear the test of square  
And line of God's own plummet.

## TO MISS JULIA ROMAN

When we were all invited this party to attend,  
We each received a summons to come and bring our friend  
A little birthday present, to only cost a dime,  
So I am here this evening to answer make in rhyme.

I give this modest present—ten cents is all it's worth—  
Which I would gladly treble, but I don't own the earth;  
And while it's quite unworthy as gift for such as you,  
Still, I had my instructions, so what was I to do?

I bring you ten new pennies that shine like burnished gold,  
But time will dull their luster and turn them green with mold;  
Yet they'll be worth face value should you have debts to pay,  
E'en though their glossy brightness does quickly fade away.

They typify those friendships that dazzle with their charm,  
And promise much of gladness, and make our hearts beat warm.  
Then, like the pennies' luster, that lasts but for a day,  
We all too soon discover our friends are only clay.

But there are other friendships as pure as virgin gold,  
As lasting as the mountains, too warm to e'er grow cold.  
Such friendship we each bring you—of all life's joys the best—  
For, like the purest metal, 'twill stand the acid test.

Then please accept these pennies and my best wishes, too,  
That life may have much pleasure and joy in store for you.  
May roses bloom along your path to brighten all your way,  
And their sweet fragrance fill your heart throughout the live-long day.

## THE BOOKKEEPERS

(In the office of the Comptroller of the Currency)

They keep the records of the lives of all the national banks,  
Which number many thousands still, though death has thinned their ranks.

These records show the date of birth of each organization,  
Its capital, securities, likewise its circulation.  
The title of the bank comes first, the place of its location,  
The U. S. bonds deposited of each denomination.  
The charter number, too, is told, and date of expiration,  
Extensions, reextensions, or, it may be liquidation.  
Insolvency, sad to relate, has been the fate of many,  
And their demise has cost some guys a pretty little penny.  
The tales they tell oft sing the knell of fires that once were lighted,  
Reverses came, put out the flame, and their fond hopes were blighted.

So 'tis in life, in its mad strife the weaklings all go under,  
When storms appear they quake with fear and make some fatal blunder.

Not so the brave, they ride the wave, and reach their destination,  
They fight their way and win the day in spite of all creation.



## AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

You who hire the toiling millions  
In your factories and mines,  
Should know well their true condition—  
How each lives and sleeps and dines.  
For you are your brother's keeper,  
And you can not if you would,  
Shirk the duty laid upon you,  
To be mindful of his good.

Go into his humble cottage,  
Note the lack of comforts there,  
Beds of straw or shucks or shavings,  
And perhaps a stool and chair.  
It is drear and cold and cheerless  
As a land without a sun,  
And its inmates shake and shiver,  
Till the winter's race is run.

See his sad-eyed wife and children,  
Worn with life's corroding care,  
Sorrow's imprint stamped upon them,  
Born of deep and dark despair.  
Not a smile e'er lights their faces,  
Joy's a stranger to their hearts,  
They are fate's poor blighted creatures,  
Doomed to play life's saddest parts.

Many are the fearful battles  
That with hunger they have fought,  
And their pinched and hollow features  
Show the havoc it has wrought.  
Still, they are your fellow mortals,  
Though their lot may lowly be,  
Cursed, perhaps, by lack of knowledge,  
Caused by years of poverty.

Their environment has bound them,  
And their bonds they can not break,  
Therefore you should help your brother,  
And his tasks no harder make.  
Rather try to lift the burden,  
Now beyond his strength to bear,  
Do not make the rough road harder  
By your lack of thought or care.

Pay him fair and honest wages,  
And be merciful and just,  
Though you have the pow'r to crush him,  
Do not grind him in the dust.  
Treat him as you would a brother  
If you hope to win the prize—  
Joy on earth and life eternal  
In that land beyond the skies.

## A STEAMER LETTER

Good morning, fair lady, I hope you are well,  
As you sail o'er the sea and feel its deep swell;  
May no storm-cloud arise to trouble your rest,  
But calm settle o'er you like peace of the blest.

May floods of soft moonlight and twinkle of star  
Hold nightly receptions while you are so far;  
Bright be the sunshine on your path ev'ry day  
And gentle the breezes that waft you away.

Sweet be your dreaming, in the cool of the night,  
As you sit on the deck when day takes its flight,  
Thinking of homefolks, or perhaps your old friend,  
Who always has loved you and will to the end.

And when you start homeward, your journey complete—  
Tired of sight-seeing and people you meet—  
May ship bring you safely across the blue sea  
To those who best love you in land of the free.

TO MISS ALICE

Who comes to office, rain or shine, and ne'er is heard to fret or  
 whine  
 Because the weather's cold or hot, but always gets there on the dot?  
 Miss Alice.

Who tramps two miles through snow knee deep, in order that she  
e'er may keep  
Her record clear with Uncle Sam, and not be thought a shirk or  
sham?  
Miss Alice.

Who greets us all with friendly smile, though her own heart's bow'd  
down the while,  
And never once her troubles tell, but always seems so bright and  
well?  
Miss Alice.

Who has a charm about her face, which speaks to us of inward  
 grace,  
 And shows her life has been well spent, for it is God's own  
 testament?  
 Miss Alice.

## FRIENDLY PEOPLE

There's lots o' friendly fellers in this here fine ole town  
Who come to see me regler, 'cause I can't git aroun!  
They's awful good to bother about a chap like me,  
An' do me lots o' favors they never let me see.

There's Jim, my next-door neighbor, who sells the Morning Post,  
He brings the funny papers, the kind I like the most.  
An' Skid, another newsie, who tells the latest dope  
About the baseball players an' good ole Doctor Hope.

There's lots o' friendly people if you could find 'em out,  
I know at least a hundred, there's not a bit of doubt.  
They're sitting at your elbow, in office, school, and store,  
They fill the base ball bleachers and sometimes live next door.

You pass them on the sidewalk, sit by them on the cars,  
They're willing to be friendly, but custom has its bars.  
You meet them at the churches, at clubs and picture shows,  
Acquaintance might mean friendship and you be pleased—who  
knows?

## DEATH

'Tis but the entrance door to life,  
Through which each soul must go,  
And I am sure we'd welcome it  
If we the truth could know.  
'Tis but a sweet, refreshing sleep  
That comes at close of day,  
A resting of the weary feet  
Of children tired of play.  
A laying of our burdens down,  
Grown heavy through the years;  
A folding of the hands to rest,  
A drying of all tears.  
The caterpillar weaves its shroud  
When it feels that death is nigh,  
And wrapped in silken winding sheet,  
Lies down to sleep and die.  
But when the winter's night is past  
And sun warms earth and sky,  
The crysalis gives up its dead—  
The living butterfly.

## MY QUESTIONNAIRE

Imaginary reply of Mr. Charles A. Stewart, Chief Clerk, office of  
Comptroller of the Currency, to question 4.

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When filling out my questionnaire, my duties thus were stated,  
In my response to question four and other things related:

I'm called the Chief of all the Clerks, but 'tis a sad misstatement,  
I'm servant of them all, instead, yet welcome my abasement.

I honor requisitions made for sealing wax and brushes,  
And mustard gas to kill the rats and stop their constant rushes.

For when they sally forth at noon, or sooner, for that matter,  
The ladies dance the highland fling, and scream and jump and  
scatter.

I furnish soap, and towels, too, and glue that smells to heaven,  
It permeates the whole big room, just like the hidden leaven.

I mend old chairs and window shades, and furnish ice for coolers,  
And pens and ink and writing pads, and scissors, knives, and  
rulers.

I buy machines for numbering, and have their innards mended,  
When they do work unfit for use, that can not be defended.

I also listen to complaints about the hard conditions  
Imposed on this and that poor clerk, and read their long  
petitions.

Their tales of woe are very sad and start my heart to bleeding,  
While tears flow down my wasted cheeks, caused by their  
ceaseless pleading.

My raven locks—now iron gray—are proof of my contention  
That I am weighted down with care and need sick leave  
extension.

So, Mr. Kane, please grant it me and I will spend the summer  
In ease and comfort by the sea, with millionaire and plumber.



## THE BATTLE OF THE AGES

In the not far distant future, in the time that soon shall be,  
We shall smite the German Kaiser for his deeds of infamy;  
Smite him for the Lusitania, Belgium, France, and all the rest,  
Till his cruel heel of iron grinds no more their bleeding breast.

Even now the war drums rattle and the bugles call to arms  
All the people—men and women—from the cities, towns, and farms.  
Boys and girls are volunteering in this fight for human rights,  
And we'll never furl our banners till we stand on Freedom's heights.

Look, the troops are now in motion and the earth shakes with their  
tread,  
As they come from ev'ry hamlet, fearing naught that lies ahead.  
Now they board the army transports, eager for the coming fray,  
Sons of those who wore the blue coats—sons of those who wore the  
gray.

Then the boatmen loose the cables and each vessel leaves its pier,  
Making room for other troop ships, waiting for the slips to clear.  
Now the transports line the ocean in their race the world to free,  
Convoyed by a great armada of wild hornets of the sea.

As the vessels reach the waters of the sub-infested zone,  
Where the U-boats plow the furrows, where the seeds of death are  
sown,  
Suddenly a thousand airplanes from our vessels fill the sky,  
Till the transports reach their haven and the war ships all pass by.

See, the troops have left the transports and are welcomed by the  
French,  
As they march to their encampment ere they man the deadly trench.  
Now the boys are in the trenches and a battle has begun,  
Making those seem only child's play on the Somme and at Verdun.

Bright blue skies are raining bombshells from our matchless aero  
fleet,  
Mowing down a human harvest as the reapers mow the wheat;  
And ten thousand monster cannon belch forth tons of bursting shell,  
Till it seems all life must perish in that seething fire of hell.

Then the earth writhes with its tortures, thrusting out the hidden  
foe  
From the bombproofs and the trenches, as volcanoes burst below.  
Now the order "Charge," is given, and we grapple with the foe,  
Valiant men who fight like demons, boldly striking blow for blow.

But the Germans are but mortals, made of common human clay,  
Not the supermen they fancy, and they met their match this day;  
For their hosts lie still and silent, in great heaps, like garner'd  
grain,  
Heeding not the crashing heavens, nor the fury of the rain.

Both sides fought with greatest valor, not an inch would either give,  
Till the hosts of our own Pershing set the pace where none could  
live;  
For five hundred thousand gray coats fell before the day was done,  
And the Battle of the Ages had been fought and we had won.

## DO AND DON'T

Don't praise a thing because it's new, nor yet because it's old,  
But put it to the acid test to see if it be gold.

Don't stand in awe of precedents. They have no right of way.  
Cast them aside as obsolete when they have served their day.

Tear loose conventions' chafing bonds and break down custom's  
sway,

If they retard Truth's onward march for e'en a single day.

Don't heed what carping critics say. They never have a thought  
Or vision of the things worth while or how they should be wrought.

Don't follow time-worn, beaten paths because they're old and gray;  
Beyond their narrow boundaries don't be afraid to stray.

Blaze broader trails and make them straight, like highways for a  
King,

Though they may lead o'er trackless wastes or like a bird take  
wing.

Don't fill your mind with petty thoughts about the weary grind  
That circumscribes your daily life and all your actions bind.

Forget your troubles and your cares, if only for an hour,  
And think of God and His kingdom and His almighty pow'r.

Don't live in a state of worry nor over-anxious care,  
But trust in God and his goodness and work and do and dare.

Don't spend your life in the valleys, e'en though the fields be fair,  
But climb to the mountain's summit and breathe its pure, sweet air.

Look down on the world beneath you, then up to those above,  
And sweep in your mental vision the depths of God's great love.

Then pray for strength for the conflict—the daily toil and strife—  
And He may hear and answer you and give eternal life.

## IS THERE A GOD?

Is there a God? Go ask the rose the author of its being;  
Who called it from the sodden earth, its matchless beauty freeing;  
Who made the seed from which it grew and wrapped in its small  
measure

The paints and perfumes of the gods and their most priceless  
treasure.

Whose mind conceived the wondrous thought to deck the earth with  
flowers,

And caused the ground to blossom forth, first in fair Eden's bowers.  
What artist paints the lotus blooms, and who is their designer;  
The lily and the pure white rose, who is their great refiner?

None but a God could make the rose or e'en the simplest flower,  
He caused the earth to yield its blooms by his almighty power.  
Love called them forth, the love of God, that's like the hidden leaven,  
It permeates the universe and makes this earth a heaven.

## “LITTLE SISTER”

In mem'ry's flower garden, 'mid roses sweet and wild,  
I see a bright face smiling, a face of little child;  
A girl of scarce two summers, who never tires of play,  
But follows older brother and cousin all the day.

And when they build block houses and play like it's a town,  
Along comes “Little Sister” and knocks the houses down.  
And then the busy builders select another site  
On which to place a cottage and make it strong and tight.

But it is not half finished when “Sister” comes around,  
And lightning strikes the cottage 'mid thunder's crashing sound.  
They view the awful wreckage and then their flags they furl,  
They can't get mad with “Sister,” she's such a little girl.

And thus the battle rages from morning until night,  
A stand is scarcely taken ere they are put to flight.  
They try to hide behind some door, but they are quickly seen,  
For “Sister” has the sharpest eyes and hearing just as keen.

And when the battle's ended and all the towns destroyed,  
This valiant little soldier, with joy that's unalloyed,  
Comes marching in to supper as hungry as a bear,  
And climbs up to the table into her tall high chair.

Ere she has finished supper I see her head bend down,  
And hear in faintest whisper, “I knocked down ev'ry town.”  
And when I take her in my arms to carry her to bed,  
She says that she's not sleepy, and that the sandman's fled.

But soon she's in her nightie—the sweetest little gown—  
This weary little soldier who tumbled houses down.  
And then she grasps me tightly and makes me take a vow  
That I will stay right with her and tell her 'bout “moo cow.”

And as I watch her sleeping by firelight's fitful glow,  
And feel her baby fingers that will not let me go,  
My heart grows strangely tender and then beats fierce and wild  
At thought of slightest danger to this my darling child.

And when I left my baby and went to city far,  
The sunshine shone less brightly and dimmed was ev'ry star.  
No more she came to meet me, as she had always done,  
When I trudged slowly homeward at going down of sun.

She always ran to meet me, in that fair Southern land,  
And then I'd stoop and kiss her and take her by the hand  
And lead her home to “Mother,” and then the tea bell rang,  
And as she went to supper she skipped and danced and sang.

But when I left my roof tree and all the dear ones there,  
The days seemed long and dreary, the nights were full of care.  
In fancy I could see them from morn till set of sun,  
And when the lamps were lighted, the day's work nearly done.



I saw them at their supper, then dishes cleared away,  
And "Mother" writing letter she sent to me each day.  
Then "Sister" got her paper, and pencil black and tall,  
That made the queerest letters, they seemed to jump and crawl.

But I could always read them, I knew each quirk and dart,  
In one she sent ten kisses ringed 'round a little heart.  
I ever see that picture, the first she ever drew,  
The curves were not all perfect, the lines were not all true.

And yet I would not change it the least iota small,  
It's carved on living tablet in mem'ry's sacred hall;  
And there, with other pictures, it ever shall abide,  
No storms can e'er efface it, not even Death's cold tide.

Again I read those letters, so full of heart's best love,  
Again I see a picture—the whitest little dove—  
And in its mouth a missive addressed with greatest care,  
In those strange straggling letters that crawl and jump and flare.

Its seal was never broken, the note was never read,  
And yet I know its contents, and this is what it said:  
"I miss you dreadful, Papa; won't you come back to me?  
Four plates are fixed at table, but we are only three."

"Your chair is always vacant, it makes me awful sad,  
And Mamma eats just nothing, and Brother's 'most as bad.  
I get so tired and lonely, I do not care to play,  
And weary is the watching from morn till close of day."

"I see 'most ev'ry street car that passes Auntie's door,  
And when they stop at corner, I jump up from the floor  
And run to see who's coming, but you are never there,  
And then my heart's 'most broken, it is so hard to bear."

"And even after supper, when I am in my bed,  
And Mamma's read her chapter and I my prayers have said,  
If I should hear a-tramping and then the door bell ring,  
I call out 'Papa's coming,' and then my heart would sing."

"And then my good, sweet Mamma would wipe away a tear,  
And put her arms around me and say 'Not yet, my dear.  
Now, go to sleep, my darling, and may your dreams be sweet,  
Some day we'll go to Papa, some day we all shall meet'

"'In that big, bustling city that lies up north so far,  
We'll cross the hills and valleys upon the choo-choo car;  
We'll ride through town and city, we'll travel night and day,  
And when you see your Papa once more you'll sing and play'."

One day there came a letter containing message sweet,  
It said, "At last we're coming, be sure our train to meet."  
And when they reached the city the birds began to sing,  
The earth burst into blossom and joy bells sweet did ring.

The sunshine ne'er seemed brighter, nor flowers half so fine,  
The world was full of gladness and bright the stars did shine.  
The air was perfume laden with fragrant odors rare,  
And happy, smiling faces did greet me ev'rywhere.

The parks were full of flowers and children at their play,  
And there with "Little Sister" I spent some hours each day.  
We watched the happy youngsters and heard their shouts of glee,  
We watched the cooing babies, the birds upon the tree.

We saw the fountains playing, the red fish in the pool,  
And bright-eyed, rosy children on their way home from school.  
The time was in the summer, sweet days in early June,  
When hearts just sing with gladness and Nature's in attune.

I little thought the morrow would end our happy play,  
And that those skies of beauty would turn to ashen gray;  
But soon a cloud had risen, obscuring light of sun,  
And "Little Sister's" journey had ceased ere scarce begun.

And then black desolation in brooding silence fell,  
It filled the earth and heaven, its depths were deep as hell.  
My heart was crushed and broken, the joy of living fled,  
I longed to be with "Sister," my sainted little dead.

And then the flowers faded and lost their perfume sweet,  
The birds their songs ceased singing and drew their little feet  
Up close beneath their bodies, as though the night were near,  
And children talked in whispers, in dreadful awe and fear.

The fountains ceased their singing, the music died away,  
And mirthless was the laughter of children at their play.  
The earth just seemed to sicken in less than one brief hour,  
The grass did wilt and wither as though by Unseen power.

The smiling face of nature was stricken unto death,  
And mournful were the breezes, a sigh in ev'ry breath.  
The sickly sun, still hidden, did plow its weary way  
Across the dome of heaven until the close of day.'

The stars did veil their faces, as though to hide their grief,  
And weeping were the heavens, but tears brought no relief;  
For darling "Little Sister," like brightest little star,  
Just flashed across my pathway, then journeyed on so far.

I wonder why they're with us for such a little day?  
They make the briefest visits and then they go away.  
They twine their arms about us, they make us love them so,  
They lisp our names so sweetly, and then they softly go.

They were not meant to tarry; they come to lead the way  
To that fair land of promise where we shall meet some day;  
Where flowers bloom eternal and golden lilies nod—  
The home of little children—the dearly lov'd of God.

## THE BOOKS WE WRITE

We're authors all—both great and small—of works of fadeless  
glory,  
Or else we write, by day and night, for endless woe, our story.  
These book of fate contain the date of ev'ry word that's spoken,  
Each kindly thought or deed that's wrought, each loving heart  
that's broken.

Their pages white oft show the blight of some unguarded passion—  
We give it play and mold the clay that mars the life we fashion.  
But some bright leaves—life's golden sheaves—are ready for the  
reaping,  
Earth's storm and rain have left no stain on record they've been  
keeping.

The tales we tell may be the knell of all our hopes of heaven,  
For if within there's taint of sin it's like the hidden leaven.  
Yet stories sweet of willing feet on mercy's errand speeding,  
Are sometimes told in words of gold by those whose hearts are  
bleeding.

These books we write ne'er see the light for countless years and  
ages,  
But at the last, when life's long past, God opens wide their pages.  
Their leaves unsealed, we stand revealed—then woe or joy supernal,  
For by this test we find sweet rest or lose the life eternal.

The scheme of life—its toil and strife—is fixed and sure and certain,  
No mortal man can change the plan or draw aside the curtain.  
And it is best, for we are blest in knowing not the morrow,  
Lest vision keen should pierce life's screen and we see future sorrow.

## A PICTURE

There is in my old album a sweet face, young and fair,  
A girl of sixteen summers, with flowers in her hair.  
And when I see that picture, sometimes at close of day,  
My heart grows fond and tender as any boy's in May.

The years roll quickly backward and stop as if by rule,  
When I was young and boyish and she a girl at school.  
I see the college building, the big swing in the yard,  
And she is standing in it, while I am trying hard

To send her to the treetops, a feat requiring strength,  
But I am on my mettle, and strive until at length  
I send the swing a-soaring, way high up in the sky,  
And then she calls out gayly, "Just let the old cat die."

And when the swing stops swinging I help her to the ground,  
And then we laugh and chatter, or slowly stroll around.  
And when the day is ended—e'en happy days must end—  
I say "good-night," yet linger, ere homeward way I wend.

I know not why I lingered, no reason I assign,  
It may have been the moonlight, so soft and bright and fine;  
Or else those sweet red roses, on lip, on cheek, in hair,  
I may have hoped to steal one, and had I, would she care?

## WHAT IS LOVE?

What is love? Why, it's a thought,  
Or some kindly deed that's wrought  
For a friend or neighbor;  
It's the mending of a kite  
For some luckless little wight  
Who's too small to labor.

It's a balm for wounded heart,  
When it's pierced by Cupid's dart,  
Which so seldom misses;  
It's the fountainhead of bliss,  
Where each dainty little miss  
Gets her smiles and kisses.

What is love? Why, it's the cause  
Of the gifts from Santa Claus  
Each bright Christmas morning;  
It's the smile that lights the eye,  
When the gifts the children spy,  
Holly tree adorning.

It's a river full of tears,  
Flowing through the weary years  
Of some life sore-laden;  
It's the hope within each breast  
That our dead have found sweet rest  
In the holy Aidenn.

What is love? Why, it's the mind,  
Singing as we toil and grind  
At some task or other;  
It's a song that soothes to rest  
Infant sleeping on the breast  
Of devoted mother.

It's a fire that purifies,  
Through our hallowed human ties,  
All who pass its portals;  
It's a glass through which we see  
Glimpses of divinity  
In our fellow mortals.

What is love? Why, it's the way  
Leading up to endless day  
And the city splendid;  
It's an ocean on whose tide  
We are borne to other side  
When our journey's ended.

It's the password to that rest  
Where are those we once caressed  
Like some tender flower;  
It's eternal as the stars,  
And will break death's prison bars  
By its mighty power.



## THE MASTER PAINTER

Who paints the Easter lilies in raiment pure and white?  
Who paints the morning-glories in all their splendor bright?  
Who paints the leaves in springtime and tints them in the fall?  
Who paints the bow of promise that girdles heaven's wall?  
Who paints the peacock's feathers with jeweled Argus eyes?  
Who paints the stars by millions in dome of deep blue skies?  
Who paints the grapes of harvest, some white, some black, some green?  
Who paints the gray old mountains in coats of glist'ning sheen?  
Who paints the arch above us, so clear and blue and bright?  
Who paints the jasmine flowers in shades of living light?  
Who paints the lonely prairie at twilight's solemn hour?  
Who paints the lotus blossom, that far-famed eastern flower?  
Who paints the fields of cotton in vestments snowy white?  
Who paints the laughing sunshine and shadows of the night?  
Who paints the red-ripe cherries in crimson colors rare?  
Who paints the golden pippins, the fruit beyond compare?  
Who paints the sweet carnations, in white, in pink, in red?  
Who paints the orange blossoms that brides wear when they wed?  
Who paints the fields in autumn with yellow golden-rod?  
Who paints the tall tuberoses that bend and bow and nod?  
Who paints the red-wing blackbird that flits from tree to tree?  
Who paints the grand old ocean, so wide and deep and free?  
Who paints the white magnolia, so fragrant, pure and bright?  
Who paints the ermined snowballs when winter takes its flight?  
Who paints the water lilies that float on lake and stream?  
Who paints the graceful goldfish in rich hues all a-gleam?  
Who paints the varied tintings on bright-winged butterfly?  
Who paints the flashing lightning that cleaves the stormy sky?  
Who paints the great black forest that foot has never trod?  
That artist of the ages—the Master Painter, GOD.

## THE NEW ARRIVAL

You're welcome, little stranger; yes, sir, indeed you are.  
Did you come across the waters on Hymen's nuptial car,  
Or did the angels bring you from some far-off, distant star?

You're welcome, little stranger—we want to make it plain—  
Did you come by boat or trolley, or special railroad train,  
Or did the good fairies bring you through sunshine, storm, and rain?

You're welcome, little stranger—you have not told your name—  
But it matters not who brought you, nor yet from whence you came;  
We're all so glad to see you, and we love you just the same.

You're welcome, little stranger—now do not be so coy—  
We are so glad and happy that our hearts just sing for joy,  
And may heaven's richest blessings rest on our baby boy.



## THE LONGEST HOUR

'Tis often said the darkest hour is just before the dawn,  
Ere ebon hues and somber shades of night have been withdrawn.  
But shadows flee before the sun and quickly disappear;  
They vanish like the fright of child when mother soothes his fear.

I know not if the story's true, I never stayed awake  
A-watching for the darkest hour ere day begins to break.  
And so I can not vouch for it, nor yet can I deny,  
It may be simple, honest truth—it may be just a lie.

But I know well the longest hour since time began to run,  
And doubtless you remember too, for it's no fake or fun.  
You may, perhaps, recall the day when comp'ny came to dine,  
And you were told to catch and kill some chickens fat and fine.

You mixed a lot of corn-meal dough to feed the hungry flock,  
And ere they half suspected it their heads were on the block.  
And when at last the dinner bell announced the joyful hour,  
The guests were all invited in, those chickens to devour.

We children always had to wait—there was no room for us—  
And we were told to stay out doors and not to make a fuss.  
We lingered long and patiently, yet still the feast went on,  
They never gave a thought to us, nor cared, now we were gone.

But after seeming hours had passed we climbed upon the fence  
That ran beside the dining room, in childish innocence.  
The windows large were open wide, and we could see each guest  
Pass up his plate the second time for gravy and more breast.

We watched the greedy cormorants with hearts that ached with  
pain—  
We feared there would be nothing left, yet dared we not complain.  
But dinings always have an end, though sometimes long drawn out,  
And when we saw the end in sight we almost gave a shout.

They didn't notice us at first—at least pretended not—  
But we kept sitting on our perch, though it was scorching hot.  
At last they seemed to understand why we were camping there,  
The picture must have touched their hearts by its pathetic air.

For soon they left the dining room, and then we made a break  
For peach ice cream and syllabub and good old jelly cake.  
We then ate all the drum sticks left, and lots of chicken pie,  
The pastry was so crisp and nice we made it fairly fly.

Long years have passed away since then, years kindly dealt by fate,  
Yet I would live them o'er again e'en though I had to wait,  
When company to dinner came and ate up all the breast,  
For older children learn to know how greatly they were blest.

## AN OLD MAN'S DREAM

While sitting in my old arm chair I softly fell asleep  
And dreamed of days when I was young—when I could jump and  
    leap,  
And run as fast a half-mile race as any boy in town—  
When I could wrestle with the best and none could throw me down.

Once more I turned a somersault from off the old springboard  
That jutted out above the stream, below the rocky ford;  
Then swam across the widest part some seven times or more,  
And floated, dived, the water tread, as though it were a floor.

I rode again Dad's big black horse, without a saddle, too,  
And made him jump the highest fence—it seemed he almost flew.  
And then I climbed the tallest trees, yet never got a fall,  
When hunting for the muscadines that grew in bunches small.

I dug once more a can of bait and felt the fishes bite  
At the enticing earthen worm that hid the hook from sight.  
Again I pulled the beauties in—trout, bream, and cat galore—  
Then homeward trudged with such a string as ne'er was seen before.

I took again my dogs and gun and killed two fine fat hares,  
And as for doves and partridges I bagged a dozen pairs.  
And then I found a guinea's nest all hidden in the grass,  
But I was loaded down with game and had to let it pass.

Next I and lots of other boys were fighting yellow jackets,  
With switches four or five feet long, that made the worst of rackets.  
But somehow one escaped our blows and straightway at me flew,  
It hit me square upon the knee and seemed to go clear through.

And then I yelled aloud with pain, which caused me to awake,  
But I had not been stung at all, although my knee did ache.  
The pain was caused by rheumatism—I realized it then—  
Ah, would it had been jacket's sting and I a boy again.

## WHY SATAN FELL

There's nothing so good as 'possum, that ripens late in the fall,  
When the nights grow cold and chilly, and the white frost covers  
    all;

Then the 'simmon tree is loaded, with its fruit so rich and ripe,  
That the 'possum just can't stand it, so he goes to make a swipe,  
When along comes mister hunter, with his dogs and gun and light,  
And he spies the old gray 'possum, a-hugging the tree so tight,  
That the hunter doubts his vision, but his doubts are gone ere long,  
For the sound of sweetest music, as the dogs break into song,  
Produces a deep conviction that the sly old 'possum's there,  
So he guards the tree with caution and great watchfulness and care.  
But why enter into details when you know the certain fate  
That is meted out to 'possums if caught staying out too late,  
A-hunting for ripe persimmons, the fruit that the 'possums love,

Better than all the sweets on earth or grapes in the trees above,  
 For the hunter's sure to get him, when his fate's forever sealed,  
 And he's placed, with sweet potatoes, that are nicely washed and  
     peeled,  
 In the baking dish or oven, where he's watched with tender care,  
 And is cooked until each morsel is so richly browned and rare,  
 That poor mortal man stands speechless when the fragrant odors  
     rise,  
 Till they fill each nook and corner, then in triumph mount the skies,  
 Causing the heavens to open and the angels to bend down,  
 To catch a breath from that oven of 'possum baked sweet and  
     brown.  
 No, there's nothing good as 'possum, but it brought us all our woe,  
 At least the legends tell us that, and the legends ought to know.  
 The old story is that 'possum was the cause of Satan's fall—  
 That when he smelled its perfume rare as it rose from this old ball,  
 He simply could not stand the strain, and his bright and golden  
     crown,  
 He laid aside and made a dive—followed the aroma down.  
 It may not be the legend's true that he thus fell from glory,  
 Yet Satan's presence on the earth lends color to the story;  
 But if you can not accept it, why, just simply turn it down,  
 Still, there's nothing good as 'possum and potatoes sweet and  
     brown.

## A NEW SHIP ON AN OLD MODEL

Were I some gifted writer I would a story weave  
 About the dainty craft that came last Sunday eve  
 From over Love's great ocean—across Life's crystal sea—  
 And anchored in a southern port—this barque of mystery.

She's a dainty little vessel, although the model's old,  
 Yet those to whom she came consigned, though offered all the gold  
 And all the jewels in the earth if they would with her part,  
 Would promptly turn the offer down with answer quick and tart.

For she's a little baby—this ship from Hymen's land—  
 And if you could but see her you quite would understand  
 Why she is held in such esteem—this bright and winsome lass—  
 A bit of golden sunbeam whom none can e'er surpass.

For we love all the children—both little girls and boys—  
 And when they come to stay with us we learn to know the joys  
 That come to us from loving them, for 'tis this gracious leaven  
 Which sweetens all the ills of life and makes this earth a heaven.

Then to this little stranger—this charming little miss—  
 We send a joyous welcome, a hug, and hearty kiss.  
 And when bright summer comes again and southern breezes blow,  
 May they waft her to Washington, where we all love her so.

## A REMINISCENCE

Note the girls you meet this season, both brunettes and blondes so  
fair,  
It's a pleasure to behold them, they're so blithe and debonair;  
And their dainty dress creations make them look bewitching sweet,  
Like the maids of mem'ry's morning, whom to love was but to meet.

As I look the years roll backward—just how many I'll not say—  
But these girls are living pictures of the belles of that old day;  
And their bright and smiling faces make my heart beat quick and  
fast,  
For they bring back sweetest mem'ries of the golden days long past.

Ah, how fond the recollection of one August afternoon,  
I was boating with my sweetheart—happy hours! they flew too  
soon.  
And I still can see the river, rippling in the summer's breeze,  
Where my gallant little vessel rode at anchor 'neath the trees,

Tugging at her slender cable, restless from the weary wait,  
For she knew that we were coming and was fretting for her freight.  
But we quickly loosed her moorings and were off on pleasure's quest,  
For we had Dan Cupid with us, Love's old pilot, as our guest.

Then we drifted with the current wheresoe'er our bark it took,  
Sometimes in the laughing sunshine, then to cool and shady nook.  
But I cared not where we journeyed, whether slow or fast we went,  
For my sweetheart smiled upon me and seemed happy and content.

Bright and golden were those day dreams, all forgot was friend or  
foe,  
As I listened to her singing some quaint ballad soft and low;  
And once more I hear the music of that simple little song,  
As it's wafted o'er life's billows in a sweet voice clear and strong.

Soon we two were gently gliding down the river's western side,  
Where the ev'ning sun, half hidden, cast long shadows far and wide.  
There the ever-changing current carried us, as in a dream,  
Where the water lilies blossomed on the bosom of the stream.

And I robbed the river's garden of its cups of gold and green,  
Wrought a wreath of wondrous beauty, crowning her my water  
queen.  
Then she bade me sit beside her and I dared not disobey—  
But the mists are on the river and the picture fades away.



## WAIL OF A REJECTED MANUSCRIPT

I'm sick and tired of travel, I long to take a rest,  
I've seen the Eastern cities, I've roamed the golden West;  
I've been down South in Dixie, and then up North in Maine,  
I've traveled in the sunshine, I've traveled in the rain.

I've been in wrecks and washouts, I once was scorched by fire,  
I've cost a lot of postage, and once I cost a wire.  
I've been way out to Denver, where it was thought I'd sell,  
I've been to Arizona, where it's too hot to tell.

The many miles I've traveled are in the record book,  
The number would surprise you, if you could take a look.  
I travel spring and summer, and fall and winter, too,  
A trip is scarcely ended ere I start out anew.

My author keeps a ledger, which tells a simple tale—  
The travels of the stories which he sends through the mail.  
They all are entered in it, to each he gives a page,  
He does the thing up handsome, his plans are broadest gauge.

The title of the story of course is at the top,  
And further information is added drop by drop;  
The magazine is mentioned to which the story's sent,  
The place where it is published, the date the story went.

And other figures follow—the date of its return,  
The distance it has traveled, the postage it did burn.  
And lastly, there's a statement—a column of "Remarks"—  
It's full of funny comment—the author's brightest sparks.

And thus the story's travels are jotted down each trip,  
And I have made some fifty unless I've made a slip.  
I've been to all the cities, the record plainly shows,  
My page will soon be finished, thus ending all my woes.

For when the sheet is covered, my journeys then will cease,  
My trials will be over and I will be at peace.  
I've had full fifty chances and failed in ev'ry one,  
The record stands against me, and that's no fake or fun.

Yet I am not downhearted, I do not take the blame,  
The joke is on my author—to write such stuff's a shame;  
But he is just a novice, he did the best he could,  
And in the distant future I hope he'll yet make good.

## BABY'S INDICTMENT

They reign in lordly fashion, like king upon his throne,  
They will not brook coercion, as we are quickly shown.  
They make us slaves and vassals, to answer beck and call,  
They want a thing this minute, they will not wait at all.

They sleep with both ears open to catch the faintest sound,  
They hear the slightest bustle of mother slipping round.  
They wake us in the morning when we are dead for sleep,  
They scarcely wait for daylight ere they begin to cheep.

They never stop a minute the blessed livelong day,  
They only think of mischief, though they may call it play.  
They care not what they swallow just so they get it down,  
They never balk at scissors and seldom even frown.

They make of us a plaything to pull and punch and maul,  
They slap and cuff and kick us, they're tyrants, one and all.  
They try to scratch our eyes out and pull our ears off, too;  
They hammer with our watches and never care a sou.

And yet we love the rascals regardless of it all,  
We are their willing subjects—these kings and queens so small.  
Their right is never questioned, their sceptor we obey,  
And when they would ride horseback we buckle down to play.

If we get tired of stooping, or try to change the game,  
They kick, and we keep at it, although our backs are lame.  
They want a nice cucumber, we may not think it well,  
But if we should refuse them they raise their college yell.

And when the evening shadows grow long and longer still,  
The sandman comes to see them, and much against their will  
They have to cease their labors until another day,  
When they begin all over the happy game of play.

We take the little toilers and lift them to our knee,  
To Shut-Eye town they're going, as we can plainly see.  
They twine their arms about us, then nestle for a nap,  
The queen with broken dolly, the king with soldier's cap.

## A PICTURE IN MARBLE

Once a sculptor, gazing fondly at a block of marble bare,  
Was addressed by famous painter, who said "Friend, what see you  
there  
In that rough old granite column, that's so hard, and cold, and  
white?  
Is it picture of some loved one who has gone to realms of light?"

"Yes," replied the sculptor, gently, "'tis a sweet face, young and  
fair,  
Crowned with tresses gleaming golden in a wealth of sun-kissed  
hair;  
And a form of matchless beauty, perfect symmetry and grace,  
While the love light lies half-hidden in her dear, angelic face."

And the picture, fair and girlish, grew in grace and beauty rare,  
As the sculptor carved and chiseled with such tender love and care;  
And the strokes of muffled mallet, lest perchance they cause distress,  
Were as gentle and as loving as fond mother's sweet caress;

Soft as strains of sweetest music, light as fluffy flake of snow,  
Or the murmur of the roses when the South winds whisper low,  
Telling them to wake from slumber, and in colors rich and rare,  
Dress the earth in bloom and blossom till their fragrance fills the  
air;

Gentle as the fall of rose-leaf, weighted down by drop of dew,  
Or the sound when Cupid forges bands of love that bind hearts true;  
Soft as crooning voice of mother, wooing weary babe to rest,  
As he clings and cuddles closely, pillowed on her gentle breast.

Now, at last, the statue's finished, and the sculptor's work is done;  
Now he wears Fame's wreath of laurel, crown of glory fairly won;  
And a world of willing subjects in their hearts this king enthrone  
When they see this perfect picture chiseled from a block of stone.

## THE CANDIDATE'S SOLILOQUY

I wonder if the records show—the records of the Fates—  
That I'll be named for President of these United States?  
Or will it be Vice-President, the next on honor's roll;  
Will my name grace the second place on Fame's immortal scroll?

Not there, you say? Then look again, and scan each high position,  
Perchance I'll guide the ship of state, for I have great ambition;  
Or hold in leash the dogs of war or man our mighty navy,  
And send the foreign fighting ships to Jones, whose first name's  
Davy.

Or will I rule in high finance, or honest agriculture,  
And teach the farmers how to tell an eagle from a vulture?  
Perhaps 'tis justice I'll mete out to all this nation's workers—  
The rich, the poor, the high, the low, the toilers and the shirkers.

Maybe I'll sit with judges great upon the bench supreme,  
Or represent a sovereign State and make the eagle scream;  
Or be some great ambassador, and win renown and fame  
In statecraft and diplomacy, that wondrous ticklish game.

My name's not there? Well, I declare. I wonder what's the  
reason?

For I have sought for some soft snap both in and out of season.  
What's that you say? You've found my name? And what is the  
position?

I hope it's something great and good and worthy my ambition.

"You're slated for the foremost place in field of aviation—  
As pilot for those candidates who failed of nomination.  
You'll guide their fleet of aeroplanes without a fear or quiver,  
As you and they so gently glide up that old stream—Salt River.

## SUNSHINE

I saw my old friend Sunshine this morning on the cars,  
His smiling face was beaming, his eyes were bright as stars.  
He seemed so well and happy, as though this life were sweet  
And full of all the good things that one could wish to meet.

When Sunshine comes to see me I always make him stay,  
I just insist upon it and he can't say me nay.  
He's such a jolly fellow, he slaps you on the back  
And says, "Good morning, Charlie, and how are you, friend Mack?"

His voice is always cheery, he never has the blues,  
He's always bright and cheerful and tells the latest news.  
If you did only know him you'd walk across the street  
To shake the hand of Sunshine, though weary were your feet.

He's full of fun and humor, his heart seems always light,  
But if it's sore and heavy he keeps it out of sight.  
He seldom tells sad stories, he wears no martyr's face,  
He's made of truest metal—of nothing mean or base.

He's only nicknamed Sunshine, I call him that for fun,  
Because the name just suits him, he's so much like the sun.  
He drives away the shadows, he gives new life and hope,  
His smile is so entrancing one can not fear or mope.

I wish there were more like him, he's my ideal of man,  
He's brave and lion-hearted, he's made on God's own plan.  
He loves his fellow mortal and lets that love be known  
While here on earth it's needed, nor waits till life has flown.

For then the weary worker will neither know nor care  
What he may think about him, or say, or do, or dare.  
Now is the golden moment to let him know your heart,  
Don't wait till Death's cold fingers have snatched you far apart.



## SMILE, GROUCHY, SMILE

Quit your frowning and your scowling,  
Smooth your corrugated brow;  
Stop your whining and your howling,  
Cut it out, and do it now;  
Smile, Grouchy, smile.

Cease your weeping and your wailing,  
Dry your eyes and stop your noise;  
You're no infant, sick and ailing,  
Needing cuddling, nurse, and toys;  
Smile, Grouchy, smile.

Tell no more your tales of sorrow,  
Others have their troubles, too;  
Chase away that look of horror,  
Lest it should abide with you;  
Smile, Grouchy, smile.

Change your diet if you're eating  
Aloes, gall, and wormwood pie;  
Sweeten up your disposition,  
You can do it if you try;  
Smile, Grouchy, smile.

Take off that old coat of sackcloth,  
Knock the ashes from your hair;  
It's a shame to look so doleful  
When the world's so bright and fair;  
Smile, Grouchy, smile.

Come into the blessed sunshine,  
Let it warm your withered heart;  
Leave the land of deadly nightshades  
Ere you feel their poisoned dart;  
Come, Grouchy, come.

Say "good morning" to your comrades,  
Let your voice ring clear and true;  
Give each one a pleasant greeting  
As life's journey you pursue;  
Speak, Grouchy, speak.

Do not be so all-fired stingy  
With your words of friendly cheer;  
Speak today while they are needed,  
It may be too late next year;  
Speak, Grouchy, speak.

Now's the time for resolutions; won't you join me in this one? --  
Let's resolve that we'll do better this year than we've ever done;  
Be more friendly with our fellows, try to lend a helping hand,  
Speak brave words of cheer and comfort as we travel through this  
land;  
Sow the seeds of hope and courage, they will blossom, never fear,  
And their perfume, sweet and fragrant, will go with us through  
the year.

## WHERE LOVE IS

It is in a maiden's sigh,  
As she bids a fond goodbye  
To her soldier lover;  
It is in a baby's word,  
Sweetest, dearest ever heard,  
When he first says "Muvver."

It is in a thought of home,  
When in distant lands we roam,  
Wooing fleeting pleasure;  
It is in a mother's heart,  
When her loved ones from her part,  
Seeking fame or treasure.

It is in a boy's first kiss,  
Granted him by some sweet miss  
As a simple matter;  
It is in that sound so sweet,  
Made by little children's feet,  
As they patter, patter.

It is in warm clasp of hand,  
Wearing little golden band,  
Love's most sacred token;  
It is in a glance—a look,  
Plainly writ as in a book,  
Or a word that's spoken.

It is in the warmth of spring,  
In the songs the birds all sing,  
And in blooming flowers;  
It is in the gentle breeze,  
Wafting from the southern seas  
Welcome April showers.

It is in the laughing eyes,  
Deep and blue as heaven's skies,  
When Love's torch is lighted;  
It is in the smiling face,  
Of the bride in filmy lace,  
When her vows are plighted.

It is in a touch—a tear,  
In a smile of friendly cheer  
For some soul in sorrow;  
It is in the darkest hour,  
And sustains by unseen power  
Him who'll know no morrow.

## A HUNGRY MAN'S SOLILOQUY

Who first discovered turkeys, those birds of great renown,  
And stuffed them full of oysters and baked them sweet and brown?  
Who first discovered spareribs, and backbones, souse, and ham,  
And early white potatoes, and peas, and nice spring lamb?  
Who first discovered beefsteak, rib roast, and mutton chops,  
And canvasback, and redheads, that have those funny tops?  
Who first discovered woodcocks, and reed birds, snipe, and quail,  
And pheasants, doves, and pigeons, and partridges, and rail?  
Who first discovered red fish, and trout, and pompano,  
And bass, and shad, and flounders, as flat as any hoe?  
Who first discovered 'possum, that grows away down South,  
And juicy little piglet, with apple in its mouth?  
Who first discovered waffles, red hot, and crisp, and brown,  
And batter cakes and biscuit, and butter melted down?  
Who first discovered buckwheat, and maple syrup fine,  
And sorghum and molasses, and honey clear as wine?  
Who first discovered turtles—the diamond back and green—  
And ham and eggs and bacon, and bread with jam between?  
Who first made apple dumplings, and apple sauce and pie,  
And peach ice cream and cobbler, and cherry bounce and rye?  
Who first made chicken salad and good old turkey hash,  
And lots of other nice things that call for hard, cold cash?  
I sit here now and wonder how they all came about—  
The mincemeats and the jellies, the pickles and the kraut;  
And while I sit and wonder I feel a wild desire  
To go right out and buy some—but I must curb my fire,  
And draw my belt up tighter, another notch or two,  
To fit my empty stomach, for I have not a sou.  
But I'd have all those dainties and others quite as nice,  
If I just had the needful—if I just had the price.

## MENTAL PICTURES

When you take a mental picture  
Of some fellow that you know,  
You should get the right perspective  
Ere you let your subject go.

Look at him from ev'ry angle,  
Note his breadth and weight and height,  
And be sure that you're not cross-eyed,  
Or have trouble with your sight.

Size him up, but do it kindly,  
As you'd have him size up you;  
Just remember there are artists  
Who can paint your picture, too.

It's not always fair to judge him  
By the garments he may wear,  
Or the color of his whiskers,  
Or the way he parts his hair.

Those are all good indications,  
But they sometimes lead astray;  
Better base your calculations  
On what he may do or say.

When you measure up your neighbor,  
Do not use a quarter peck;  
He may fill a good half bushel,  
And run over quite a speck.

Neither should you take his measure  
With a little two-inch rule,  
You may need a full-grown yardstick,  
Standing high upon a stool.

When you put him in the balance,  
Do not use a four-pound weight;  
He may pull a good two hundred  
And have brains within his pate.

Don't regard a friendly action  
With suspicion and distrust;  
Some men love to do a kindness,  
It's inherent, and they must.

Don't attribute sordid motives  
To the bearer of a gift;  
It's a form of love's expression,  
Old as time, and flies as swift.

## THE EBBING TIDE

When the ebbing tide of the great divide  
Recedes from the shores of Time,  
'Twill bear on its crest, like motherly breast,  
My barque to a distant clime.

It will sail away o'er the King's highway  
To that port on the Master's chart  
Where the ships all go when their fires burn low  
And the lone helmsman loses heart.

When the grass is wet and is jewel set  
With the pearly tears of night,  
It will cross the bar when the morning star  
Is dimmed by the world's great light.

It will fade away in the mists of gray  
That hover o'er Life's great ocean,  
And will ne'er be seen, though with vision keen  
You seek to follow its motion.

It will leave its pier, which has grown so dear,  
While the winds are softly sighing,  
And another ship will enter its slip  
Ere the first brief day is dying.

But that lonely barque on an ocean dark,  
In the midst of a restless sea,  
Will never come back, for that unknown track  
Is the road to eternity.

## THE FLYING YEARS

What makes the days so swiftly fly?  
They vanish like a flash;  
One has no time for anything  
In this mad rush and dash.  
The seasons, too, are growing short,  
They crowd each other out;  
Old winter's scarcely in the ring  
Ere he is put to rout.

In years gone by the days were long,  
There was no lack of time  
For all the things one had to do  
When in his boyhood prime.  
I've often done a full day's work  
Before the breakfast bell  
Rang out its summons sweet and clear  
In tones I loved so well.

I've known the sun to stand stock still,  
Suspended in the sky,  
While I set out potato slips  
Till I half wished to die.  
It scarcely seemed to move an inch  
For three full hours or more;  
I watched it mighty closely, too,  
For I was tired and sore.

The days just seemed to have no end  
When there was work to do,  
For I a hundred tasks performed,  
Yet never hurried through.  
Time seemed to drag, then take a rest,  
Forgetting it had stopped,  
But I kept gamely plugging on,  
Nor faltered, though I dropped.

The Christmases seemed far apart—  
A dozen years between—  
And so were the May-day picnics,  
When Love crowned Beauty queen.  
But now the anniversaries  
Come crowding thick and fast,  
They're swift as Halley's comet,  
And like it, soon are past.

Time never loiters on its march  
As in the olden day,  
When castles in the air were built  
To while the hours away.  
Those good old days are past and gone,  
To never more return,  
When one could work for sixteen hours  
And yet have time to burn.



## ALL HONOR TO THE SHE-BEAR

In the Rudyard Kipling poem which is causing such a wail—  
That “the female of the species is more deadly than the male”—  
There is much keen observation by a man who soars aloft  
In poetic flights of fancy and to whom all hats are doffed.

But he does not pay that tribute to the virtues of the sex  
That is theirs by right of justice, and he knows that he will vex  
By his plain, unvarnished statement ev’ry Woman in the land—  
For ’tis love that gives them courage—love that Man can’t  
understand.

True, the Himalayan she-bear when she finds her vested rights  
Are about to be invaded, squares herself and stands and fights.  
Fights as ev’ry valiant female that this world has given birth—  
For her land and home and offspring, and the right to walk this  
earth.

And she walks it without question, for she has no doubts or fears,  
So the shouting of the peasant falls on deaf, unheeding ears.  
But if they should try conclusions as to which should step aside,  
The peasant feels the teeth and nails of the she-bear in his side.

For she fights with Nature’s weapons, with the courage of her sex,  
And ’twere well to take precautions ere her lofty soul you vex.  
For she will not brook intrusion—she has rights as well as Man—  
And the courage to defend them, though it shorten life’s brief span.

Then all honor to the she-bear, who defends with tooth and nail  
Those rights that nature gave to her, and that none e’er dare assail  
Without meeting with her protest, which she puts in pointed light,  
And Man must either step aside or stand his ground and fight.

## THE OLD FARM WAGON

This was once a brand-new wagon, now it's old and broken down,  
Dry and rusty are its axles, and its wheels will not go round;  
Half its tires and spokes are missing, and its body's passed away,  
E'en the bolster where it rested turns to dust through slow decay.  
Both the single-trees have vanished, and the double-tree as well,  
Time's rough hand is laid upon it and it crumbles where it fell.  
But the tongue, so straight and slender, still survives the flight of  
    years,  
And it could a story tell you, full of laughter, love, and tears.

It was once a splendid wagon, painted green, its timbers stout,  
And my youngsters, when they saw it, came a-running with a shout.  
Then their mother heard the racket as the children laughed and  
    cried,  
And a moment later joined us in a joyous, happy ride.  
We drove o'er the big plantation, through the meadows sweet and  
    fair,  
Where the cattle browsed contented in the clover-scented air.  
Then we forded "Laughing Water," where the horses stopped to  
    drink  
Of its cool and limpid sweetness, filling stream from brink to brink.

It has hauled gay picnic parties, and the winter's wood as well,  
Been in camp with fishing experts, heard the stories they all tell  
Of the ten-pound bass they've landed, and the monsters that they  
    lost—  
Harmless fiction—flights of fancy—entertainment without cost.  
Brought in loads of watermelons, rosy apples, peaches fine,  
Luscious pears and red-ripe cherries, plums, and juicy grapes for  
    wine;  
Tons of hay of sweetest clover, barley, rye, and corn and wheat,  
Sweet potatoes without number, pumpkins, squash, and blood-red  
    beet.

It has hauled the fleecy cotton from the fields to ginhouse old,  
Then to town, with other produce, to the market, where 'twas sold.  
Gathered in the nuts for winter—chestnuts, walnuts, chinquapins—  
Peanuts, scalybarks, and popcorn—each one helped to fill the bins.  
Twice it took gay wedding parties to the church upon the hill,  
Carried corn and wheat and barley to be ground at Duncan's mill.  
Once it bore a little casket to the country churchyard old—  
But the tongue grows strangely silent, though the half has not been  
    told.

## THE LAST VOYAGE

When the day is done and the ev'ning sun  
Lies low in the golden west,  
And the fires burn low and to ashes go  
And the night has come for rest,  
I shall fall asleep while the watchers keep  
Their vigil of love for me,  
As the ebbing tide of the great divide  
Is bearing me out to sea  
In a vessel frail, with its shrouded sail  
And its old and broken mast,  
Which the winds of death, with their icy breath,  
May wreck ere the night is past.  
For the monotone of the sad sea moan,  
Borne in on the rising blast,  
As the storm draws nigh and the sea gulls cry  
While scurrying quick and fast,  
Is the drear refrain of funeral train,  
Chanting its song for the dead,  
Who are crossing o'er to that other shore  
Where so many souls have fled—  
A requiem song for that mighty throng  
Who sleep in their ocean bed,  
In their unmarked graves, 'neath the rolling waves,  
Till the night of death has sped,  
And there comes repose to the souls of those  
Who bravely did their duty—  
For the masters grand, in that deathless band  
Who wear God's crown of beauty.

## LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Columbus, Ga., March 23, 1910.

Mr. Herndon.

My dear Sir:

I have received your letter acknowledging the pleasure of my favorable mention of your poem in the March Florida Review. I am sure the poem deserved the highest praise that I bestowed upon it or that anyone could give to it. \* \* \*

Dr. Minot J. Savage, formerly Unitarian minister of Boston and New York, in one of his book of sermons called "Being in God," with a genius that is peculiar to Savage, shows that the primeval mind first saw an Almighty Power in the arrays of nature and their beauties, etc., and that in the evolution of human intelligence it became inevitable to associate with these created things a Power whose something and attributes were greater than the things themselves, and whom we call God. In this you have written the poem and Dr. Savage the sermon of the magnificent expanse and the logic of its necessity for our belief in the existence of God.  
\* \* \*

Very sincerely,  
(Signed) Charles J. Swift.

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Washington, December 6, 1915.

My dear Mr. Herndon.

I have read every line of your gem of a booklet and am grateful beyond words for the pleasure you have given me by permitting me the privilege of reading your poems.

I can't do any sort of justice in praise of them, for I ride no Pegasus nor have the Muses bathed me in "Celestial fire." All are fine, natural, heart-gripping. I can not differentiate their points of excellence, but somehow those on pages 2, 27, 28, 35 and 37, respectively, appealed to me in an especially forceful manner. They tell so clearly what I have known and felt and yet could never express.

My friend, you have a great gift. The Divine Afflatus has been breathed upon you. *Poeta nascitur non fit.*

Faithfully yours,  
(Signed) J. D. Abrahams.

---

Blowing Rock, N. C.,  
February 13, 1916.

Mr. John G. Herndon,  
c/o Southern Churchman, Richmond.

My dear Mr. Herndon.

I must thank you for that beautiful poem in the latest issue of the dear old paper we all love so well; Nature Queries is indeed a fine production and I mean to cut it out and save it.

Faithfully yours,  
(Signed) Wm. Rutherford Savage.

## SIXTY YEARS YOUNG

Men fight for fame or deathless name,  
To live on ev'ry tongue,  
But 'tis my whim to tell of him  
Who three score years is young.

All will agree that on life's sea  
His guide is wisdom's chart;  
And as 'tis told, of one of old,  
He chose that better part.

And countless seeds of kindly deeds  
His hand thru years hath sown,  
'Till lights that grace the Master's face  
Shine bright within his own.

Tho eyes grow dim, still here's to him  
Whose name will yet be sung,  
When life's dark way shall end in day,  
Where souls are ever young.

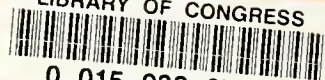
Thomas H. Herndon.

To John on his sixtieth birthday, March 15, 1916.





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